

Limiting-current sensor for the determination of the lambda-value of a gas mixture

Publication number: JP850666T

Publication date: 1996-07-16

Inventor:

Applicant:

Classification:


- International: G01N27/41; G01N27/419; G01N27/41; G01N27/417;
(IPC1-7); G01N27/41; G01N27/41

- European: G01N27/419

Application number: JP19940515328T 19941124

Priority number(s): WO1994DE01388 19941124; DE19934341278
1993 1203

Also published as:

 WO9515491 (A1) US5653858 (A1) GB2290620 (A) DE4341278 (A1) CN1116879 (A)

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Abstract not available for JP850666T

Abstract of corresponding document: GB2290620

Proposed is a limiting-current sensor for determining the lambda-value of gas mixtures, in particular the exhaust gases from internal-combustion engines. The sensor has, mounted on an oxygen-ion-conducting solid electrolyte, a first electrolytic pump cell (14) and a second electrolytic pump cell (15), each having a first cathode (12) and a second cathode (13) which are exposed to the gas to be analysed in a diffusion barrier (20). The pump cells (14 and 15) are designed in such a way that, at the same external oxygen concentration, different pump currents (I_p) are established so that, at an oxygen concentration which is at least near that of a stoichiometric gas mixture ($\lambda = 1$), the pump cell (14) with the higher current (I_p) is activated while, at an oxygen concentration outside this range, the pump cell (15) with the lower current (I_p) is operating. To this end, the cathodes (12, 13) are located, spaced apart, with different diffusion paths 11 and 12 along the diffusion barrier (20), the first cathode (12) of the pump cell (14) which is operating when the gas mixture is near-stoichiometric ($\lambda = 1$) having a shorter diffusion path (11) than the second cathode (13) of the other pump cell (15).

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(12) UK Patent Application (19) GB (11) 2 290 620 (13) A

(43) Date of Printing by UK Office 03.01.1996

(21) Application No 9515453.0
 (22) Date of Filing 24.11.1994
 (30) Priority Data
 (31) 4341278 (32) 03.12.1993 (33) DE
 (86) International Application Data
 PCT/DE94/01388 De 24.11.1994
 (87) International Publication Data
 WO95/15491 De 08.06.1995

(51) INT CL⁶
 G01N 27/419
 (52) UK CL (Edition O I)
 G1N NBMH N19F1B N25A1 N25C4D N25D2 N25E1
 U1S S1272 S1359 S1437
 (56) Documents Cited by ISA
 EP 0361692 A EP 0194082 A EP 0190750 A
 WO 90/10862 A DE004226537 A
 (58) Field of Search by ISA
 INT CL⁶ G01N

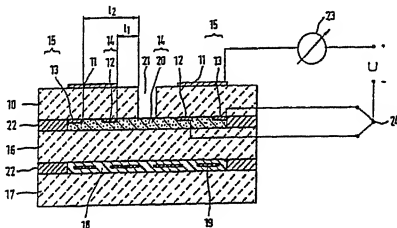
(71) Applicant(s)
 Robert Bosch GmbH
 (Incorporated in the Federal Republic of Germany)
 Postfach 30 02 20, D-70442 Stuttgart 30,
 Federal Republic of Germany

(74) Agent and/or Address for Service
 A A Thornton & Co
 Northumberland House, 303-306 High Holborn,
 LONDON, WC1V 7LE, United Kingdom

(72) Inventor(s)
 Karl-Hermann Friese
 Werner Gruenwald

(54) Limiting-current sensor for the determination of the lambda-value of a gas mixture

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GB 2 290 620 A